BAITING AND BANTERING CANDIDATES

Altogether too many candidates present themselves at our doors expecting to be made sport of - that the ceremonies are to be characterized by fun and frolic, if not by farce and buffoonery. Part of this is gathered from the comic papers, part from idle jest, and part, I regret to say, from the insinuations and pretended intimations of brethren. Part of this can not be helped, but certainly that part which comes from the thoughtless remarks of our brethren themselves can, and ought to be, prevented. Little does the average candidate dream that he is about to receive serious and solemn instruction; that he is, by symbolism, to be taught a moral philosophy based upon monotheism, the belief in one God, the Creator, Preserver and Benefactor of the world and all therein contained, and developed to the climax of teaching that greatest and most expansive concept which God has permitted the mind of man partially to comprehend - the immortality of the soul. With no admixture of sadness, but with all the joys of righteous and happy living do we embellish the symbolisms by which we develop and unfold this moral philosophy to the candidate. How unlikely indeed are we to succeed in our service to him if, even though the surroundings savor only of dignity, the candidate momentarily expects sudden mirth at his expense. How much more our teachings will sing into his heart and mind if he has no thought except that he is to be received as a gentleman into the company of gentlemen; nay more, as a neophyte into the company of those who are about to take him by the right hand and call him their brother. Bantering and baiting of candidates is all wrong. It injures the reputation of Masonry; it decreases our opportunity of service to the candidate; it reacts upon the thoughtless brother who utters the ill-timed jest; it lowers the moral tone of all concerned.

- *P.G.M. Melvin M. Johnson, Massachusetts.*

The Builder Magazine

June 1919 - Volume V - Number 6